

2 JUNE 1965 FOIAb3b

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World Press

Searching for Scapegoats

This article, by Ted Lewis, is reprinted from the New York Daily News, where it was published on May 22, under the title of "LBJ Seeks Domingo Scapegoats, Lots of Candidates."

PRESIDENTIAL advisers are now looking for scapegoats to blame for the Dominican Republic mess. The fact that such a hunt is on is sufficient proof that the Administration realized the whole military intervention operation has been fouled up in its follow-through phases. The effort to pin the blame elsewhere than on President Johnson has started with a rush in the last 24 hours. The first proposed candidates for the White House doghouse have been U.S. Ambassador W. Tapley Bennett, Jr., the new CIA chief, Adm. William F. Raborn, Jr., and Under-Secretary of State Thomas C. Mann. It does not matter whether any of these three are actually culpable. There has to be a scapegoat list, even if, as at present, it is passed along surreptitiously by officials whose tips usually reflect the White House line.

Because the errors in judgment, or misinterpretation of the Administration's programme for bringing order out of chaos, involve diplomatic, military and intelligence agencies, the list of scapegoats could be pretty long. Certainly it could be more extensive in connection with the present messed-up situation than the roll of wrong guessers and blundering operatives in John F. Kennedy's Bay of Pigs fiasco in 1961.

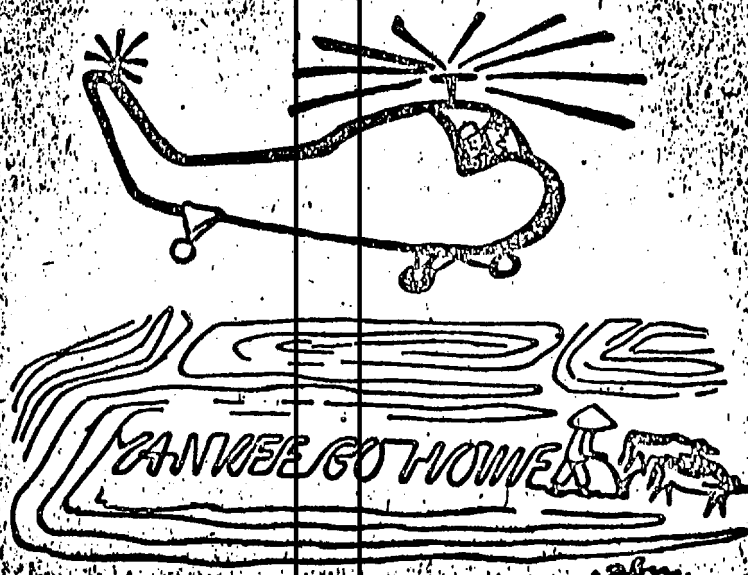
Comparatively innocent high officials had to take the rap under Kennedy in 1961, such as the then CIA head Allen Dulles, his deputy Richard M. Bissell and the then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Lyman Lemnitzer. But Kennedy at that time accepted the whole blame himself. To date the White House has shown no similar inclination.

Instead, Ambassador Bennett is being blamed on various vague counts, that he failed to have the right contacts in the Dominican Re-

public, that he over-emphasized the danger to American lives in urging the President to rush the marines in on April 28.

Raborn of the CIA is accused of making too emotional an appeal to the White House about the communist threat. This charge, from Administration sources that should know better, makes little sense. Raborn had just been sworn in on April 28 when Johnson ordered the marines in. The main CIA appeal for prompt action came from retiring CIA chief John McCone.

But the digs at Raborn are basically aimed at the intelligence operation he heads. The State Department and Pentagon have consistently cast aspersions on the value of CIA "evaluations."



British cartoonist Abu in Szpilki (Poland)

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